

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING THE CLAIMS:

1-5 (canceled)

6. (currently amended) A communication system comprising:
transmission equipment that is assigned to a particular origination path, encodes user
signals originating at or near the transmission equipment based on the origination path and a
particular destination path, and transmits the encoded user signals on the particular origination
path;

switching equipment that receives the encoded user signals on the particular origination
path, routes the encoded user signals at a path level, and transmits the encoded user signals on
the particular destination path; and

reception equipment that is assigned to the particular destination path, receives the
encoded user signals on the particular destination path, and decodes the user signals;

~~The system of claim 1,~~ wherein the switching equipment includes a controller that
dynamically re-routes the encoded user signals received from the transmission equipment to
alternative switching equipment that receives the re-routed, encoded, user signals, routes the re-
routed, encoded, user signals at a user level and transmits the re-routed encoded user signals to
the reception equipment.

7 (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A communication system comprising:

transmission equipment that is assigned to a particular origination path, encodes user signals originating at or near the transmission equipment based on the origination path and a particular destination path, and transmits the encoded user signals on the particular origination path;

switching equipment that receives the encoded user signals on the particular origination path, routes the encoded user signals at a path level, and transmits the encoded user signals on the particular destination path; and

reception equipment that is assigned to the particular destination path, receives the encoded user signals on the particular destination path, and decodes the user signals;

wherein the origination or reception equipment is mobile; and

~~The system of claim 7,~~ wherein the controller dynamically re-routes the encoded user signals when a total number of origination paths and destination paths used in the system exceed or falls below the number of system users by a predetermined threshold or a predetermined system condition occurs.

9. (original) The system of claim 8, wherein the predetermined system condition affects the effective communication of user signals within the system.

10-21 (canceled)

22. (currently amended) A communication method comprising:

assigning transmission equipment to a particular origination path;

encoding user signals based on the origination path and a particular destination path;

transmitting the encoded, user signals on the particular origination path;

receiving the encoded, user signals on the particular origination path;

routing the encoded, user signals at a path level;

transmitting the encoded, user signals on the particular destination path;

receiving the encoded, user signals on the particular destination path; and

decoding the encoded, user signals;

~~The~~ the communication method of ~~claim 18~~, further comprising:

re-routing the encoded user signals received on the origination path to alternative switching equipment;

receiving the re-routed, encoded, user signals; and

routing the received, re-routed, encoded, user signals at a user level.

23. (original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

monitoring total number of origination and destination paths and total number of users;

comparing total number of origination and destination paths and total number of users;

and

selectively performing re-routing the encoded, user signals to alternative switching equipment based on results produced by the step of comparing.

24. (currently amended) A communication method comprising:

assigning transmission equipment to a particular origination path;

encoding user signals based on the origination path and a particular destination path;

transmitting the encoded, user signals on the particular origination path;

receiving the encoded, user signals on the particular origination path;

routing the encoded, user signals at a path level;

transmitting the encoded, user signals on the particular destination path;

receiving the encoded, user signals on the particular destination path; and

decoding the encoded, user signals;

~~The~~ the method of ~~claim 18~~, further comprising:

monitoring for occurrence of a predetermined system condition;

selectively re-routing the encoded user signals received on the origination path to

alternative switching equipment based on results produced by the step of monitoring;

receiving the re-routed, encoded, user signals; and

routing the received, re-routed, encoded, user signals at a user level.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein the predetermined system condition affects the effective communication of encoded, user signals.